

Before I close, I join with my colleague from Tennessee's remarks and indicate the deepest sympathy to the family of the dean, Congressman Don Young. He is a voice—and I speak in the present. His presence was larger than life. He spoke to everyone. His booming voice is something that I am certainly going to find a great loss, as well as his love and passion for not only his family and his great State but also for this institution.

I don't know if we will ever find an institutionalist such as Don, but we can certainly follow in his footsteps and his desire for order when he cited the words "regular order."

We were blessed by having him here, and may he rest in peace.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in supporting this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 1621, the "Prohibiting Punishment of Acquitted Conduct Act of 2021, as amended.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1621.

Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

OPENING STATEMENT

Mr. Speaker. I am proud to support of H.R. 1621, the "Prohibiting Punishment of Acquitted Conduct Act," which offers a solution to a long-identified problem within our criminal justice system.

This bill provides necessary reform to current federal sentencing practice that allows judges to sentence defendants based on conduct for which a jury found them not guilty.

The Sixth Amendment to the Constitution provides that anyone accused of a crime shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public jury trial, while the Fifth Amendment provides that no person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law.

Together these provisions mean that the Government is bound to prove each and every element of an offense for which a defendant is charged beyond a reasonable doubt during a jury trial, or that a defendant must admit each element of an offense to support a plea of guilty.

Notwithstanding this constitutional obligation, federal judges routinely nullify not guilty verdicts rendered by juries and sentence defendants to significantly higher penalties based on acquitted conduct.

In its current form, 18 USC §3661 prohibits any limitation of the conduct a judge may consider when sentencing a defendant, even when a jury has determined that there was insufficient evidence to prove the defendant committed the charged offense.

Additionally, under the concept of "relevant conduct," the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines allow judges to consider a range of conduct, including dismissed charges, uncharged conduct, and acquitted conduct when imposing sentences.

The fact-finding made by judges at sentencing is based on a lower evidentiary standard than at trial—that is by a preponderance of the law—which many scholars define as a 50% chance that a claim is true.

The reform proposed in this bill ensures that judges punish defendants based on facts proven beyond a reasonable doubt—the higher evidentiary standard of proof required during jury trials, which some scholars attach a value of 90 to 95% surety.

Justice Ginsburg moderate-liberal who became more liberal in later years, joined Justice Thomas and Justice Scalia, a staunch conservative, in his dissent in *Jones v. United States*, lamenting the failure of the Court to determine if the Sixth Amendment is violated when judges impose sentences based solely on judge-found facts.

While the Sentencing Guidelines suggested prison sentences from 27 to 71 months for the three defendants in the case, the trial judge imposed sentences of 180, 194, and 225 months, based on conduct the prosecution failed to prove.

Justice Scalia's often-quoted dissent was issued more than seven years ago.

Yet nothing has been done about this unjust, undemocratic practice, which diminishes the sanctity of the jury trial, the public check on the government's power, and the overall integrity of the criminal justice system.

H.R. 1621 would restore fairness to jury trials by amending Section 3661 to ban consideration of acquitted conduct at sentencing unless the conduct is considered for mitigation purposes.

Though I wish we were doing more to advance substantive criminal justice reform, I support this bipartisan bill that addresses an acute need while restoring the basic propositions of due process and the right to trial by jury.

I thank our colleague, Representative STEVE COHEN, for his commitment to justice and for taking the lead on this significant, bipartisan bill alongside Representative KELLY ARMSTRONG.

A broad coalition of advocates support this measure, including R Street Institute, the ACLU, The Innocence Project, Brennan Center for Justice, the American Bar Association, Families Against Mandatory Minimums, the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, and Federal Public & Community Defenders.

It is my hope that the Senate will take up and pass the House version of this bill soon.

I ask my colleagues to support this bill and to continue working together on additional measures to make our justice system more equitable and more transparent.

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Prohibiting Punishment of Acquitted Conduct Act—commonsense bipartisan and bicameral legislation to restore a key aspect of fairness to our criminal justice system.

Under the U.S. criminal justice system, you are innocent until proven guilty. A principle that is foundational to our system of law and order.

Coupled with this principle, is that if you are charged with a crime, you are entitled to a trial by a jury of your peers. If they find you innocent, your case is finished.

This all makes sense—and aligns with our understanding of our justice system. But, in too many cases, our courts are punishing people for crimes they've been found innocent of.

Currently, even if one jury finds you innocent and acquits you of a crime, a different judge can still use that allegation as a basis of

providing a harsher punishment for a crime you are convicted of.

This means that the second judge can effectively unilaterally overturn a prior acquittal when considering a future sentence—dismissing the presumption of innocent until proven guilty.

This is absurd.

I was a litigator and defense attorney for many years, and I understand exactly how unjust it is for someone found innocent to have this ticking timebomb looming overhead.

This bill will end the practice of judges increasing sentences based on conduct for which a defendant has been acquitted by a jury—restoring a foundation pillar of fairness in our criminal justice system.

I want to thank Congressman COHEN and Congressman ARMSTRONG for their leadership on this issue, and I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1621, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. CLYDE. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion are postponed.

COVID-19 AMERICAN HISTORY PROJECT ACT

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4738) to direct the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress to establish a history project to collect video and audio recordings of personal histories and testimonials, written materials, and photographs of those who were affected by COVID-19, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4738

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "COVID-19 American History Project Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS; PURPOSE.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds as follows:

(1) COVID-19 is a highly infectious respiratory illness caused by a virus called SARS-CoV-2. This disease has caused a worldwide pandemic affecting millions of people and has fundamentally altered the operations of the world's cities, businesses, and schools.

(2) The outbreak of COVID-19 was first detected in Wuhan, China, and on January 21, 2020, the first confirmed case of COVID-19 was diagnosed in the United States.

(3) The World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a global pandemic on March 11, 2020, and the President of the United States issued a national emergency declaration concerning the pandemic on March 13, 2020.

(4) To date, 194 million individuals have tested positive for COVID-19. Of those, 35 million are Americans; that is, more than one of every 10 Americans. Almost 4.2 million people have died from COVID-19 globally, and over 610,000 deaths have occurred in the United States.

(5) The first American received the COVID-19 vaccine on December 14, 2020. Since then, 163 million Americans have been vaccinated and 188.5 million have received at least one dose. The vaccine became available to every American adult 18 and older on April 19, 2021.

(6) While there are still remaining cases, and healthcare professionals and researchers are tirelessly working to eradicate the disease, it is important we begin work to fully capture the firsthand personal stories of those impacted by COVID-19, a major national event in the history of this country.

(7) Oral histories are of immeasurable value to historians, researchers, authors, journalists, film makers, scholars, students, and citizens of all walks of life. Survivors of the pandemic, survivors of loved ones who lost their lives to COVID-19, and frontline healthcare workers should be remembered and can provide valuable firsthand knowledge on how this pandemic impacted their everyday lives.

(8) It is in the Nation's best interest to collect and catalog oral histories of Americans who were affected by the pandemic so that future generations will have original sources of information regarding the lives and times of those who lived through or died from the COVID-19 pandemic and conditions under which they endured. These accounts will allow an opportunity for Americans to remember those who lost their lives and may learn firsthand of the heroics, loneliness, horrors, and triumphs of the healthcare workers who combated this pandemic.

(9) The Library of Congress, as the Nation's oldest Federal cultural institution and largest and most inclusive library in human history, is an appropriate repository to collect, preserve, and make available to the public an archive of these oral histories. The Library's American Folklife Center has expertise in the management of documentation projects and experience in the development of cultural and educational projects for the public.

(b) **PURPOSE.**—It is the purpose of this Act to create a new federally sponsored, authorized, and funded project that will coordinate at a national level the collection of video and audio recordings of personal histories and testimonials, written materials, and photographs of Americans who contracted COVID-19, individuals who lost family members and friends to COVID-19, and healthcare workers who fought to treat the illness. These stories will inform, assist, and encourage local efforts to preserve the stories of this pandemic and the ones who lost their battle to the pandemic.

SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF PROJECT AT AMERICAN FOLKLIFE CENTER TO COLLECT VIDEO AND AUDIO RECORDINGS, WRITTEN MATERIALS, AND PHOTOGRAPHS OF INDIVIDUALS AFFECTED BY COVID-19.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Director of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress shall establish a history project to be known as the "COVID-19 American History Project" (hereafter referred to as the "Project") to—

(1) collect video and audio recordings of personal histories and testimonials of individuals who contracted COVID-19, individuals who lost family members to COVID-19, and frontline healthcare workers who fought to treat the illness;

(2) create a collection of the recordings obtained (including a catalog and index) which

will be available for public use through the National Digital Library of the Library of Congress and such other methods as the Director considers appropriate, to the extent feasible and subject to available resources; and

(3) solicit, reproduce, and collect written materials (such as letters and diaries) and photographs relevant to the personal histories of individuals who contracted COVID-19, individuals who lost family members and friends to COVID-19, and frontline healthcare workers who fought to treat the illness, and catalog such materials in a manner the Director considers appropriate, consistent with and complimentary to the efforts described in paragraphs (1) and (2).

(b) **USE OF AND CONSULTATION WITH OTHER ENTITIES.**—The Director may carry out the activities described in paragraphs (1) and (3) of subsection (a) through agreements and partnerships entered into with other government and private entities, and may otherwise consult with interested persons (within the limits of available resources) and develop appropriate guidelines and arrangements for soliciting, acquiring, and making available recordings, written materials, and photographs under the Project. The recordings, written materials, and photographs shall be available on the Library of Congress website and may be used to educate the public on the impacts COVID-19 has on everyday Americans.

(c) **TIMING.**—As soon as practicable after the enactment of this Act, the Director shall begin collecting video and audio recordings under subsection (a)(1).

SEC. 4. PRIVATE SUPPORT.

(a) **ACCEPTANCE OF DONATIONS.**—The Librarian of Congress may solicit and accept donations of funds and in-kind contributions to carry out the Project, subject to subsection (c).

(b) **ESTABLISHMENT OF SEPARATE GIFT ACCOUNT.**—There is established in the Treasury (among the accounts of the Library of Congress) a gift account for the Project.

(c) **DEDICATION OF FUNDS.**—Notwithstanding any other provision of law—

(1) any funds donated to the Librarian of Congress to carry out the Project shall be deposited entirely into the gift account established under subsection (b);

(2) the funds contained in such account shall be available only to the extent and in the amounts provided in advance in appropriations Acts;

(3) the funds contained in such account shall be used solely to carry out the Project; and

(4) the Librarian of Congress may not deposit into such account any funds donated to the Librarian which are not donated for the exclusive purpose of carrying out the Project.

SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act—

(1) \$250,000 for fiscal year 2023; and

(2) such sums as may be necessary for each succeeding fiscal year, except that no funds are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act for any fiscal year which begins after the expiration of the 3-year period beginning on the date of the termination of the declaration of the public health emergency declared by the Secretary of Health and Human Services pursuant to section 319 of the Public Health Service Act on January 31, 2020, entitled "Determination that a Public Health Emergency Exists Nationwide as the Result of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus".

SEC. 6. DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory

Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled "Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation" for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. SCANLON) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the measure under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4738 establishes a COVID-19 history program within the Library of Congress' American Folklife Center.

March 11 of this year marked the second anniversary of the World Health Organization's official designation of COVID-19 as a pandemic. Since then, more than 6 million people worldwide have succumbed to the disease, almost a million in the United States alone, and hundreds of millions more have suffered from its debilitating effects.

Experts agree that current statistics are likely undercounting the disease's actual toll. Indeed, the true scale of social and economic devastation caused by the virus may never be known.

Although the virus continues to disrupt daily life in ways both seen and unseen, through American ingenuity and sheer force of will, several effective vaccines were developed in record time. These vaccines continue to be an important tool as the fight to eradicate the coronavirus goes on.

As the country and world enter this next phase of the pandemic, it is important that we preserve the stories of those who lived through it. COVID-19 is not the first pandemic, and it will not be the last. Humanity has endured Black Death, cholera, influenza, HIV, AIDS, and the list goes on. As devastating as these diseases can be, there are lessons to be found in each: lessons of love and loss, of peace and strife, of failure and triumph.

Tragically, few know this firsthand better than my colleague, the gentlewoman from Louisiana and sponsor of this bill, who lost her husband, Luke, to the disease.

We applaud her for bravely answering the call of public service at such a difficult time, and we hope she and her family continue to heal and his memory serves as an inspiration to them in all that they do.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4738, the COVID-19 American History Project Act. I thank my colleague, Congresswoman JULIA LETLOW of Louisiana, for championing this important legislation.

When the COVID-19 pandemic reached our shores, our lives were all impacted. Some of these changes were temporary, and some of them were permanent.

Congresswoman LETLOW continues to live every day with the impact this pandemic has had on her family, and I am inspired by her courage and willingness to share her story. Unfortunately, her story is not entirely unique, and many families across this Nation have been forced to say good-bye to a loved one far too soon.

Their lives and memories deserve to be recorded, collected, and preserved so that this unprecedented pandemic is accurately understood by historians, students, and Americans from all walks of life.

Over the last 2 years, we have all felt fear of the unknown. In a lot of ways, when the pandemic hit, our Nation was caught off guard. This project will help ensure future generations can learn from the trials we have overcome and the triumphs we have been able to achieve.

The American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress is the largest and most extensive library in human history, and I can think of no better place to house the personal histories, testimonies, written materials, and photographs of Americans whose lives were lost, those who bravely stood on the front lines, and also all those who demonstrated the American spirit through innovation, resilience, and compassion.

As Congresswoman LETLOW has expressed, this project is about providing healing and hope for the future.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1745

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield 15 seconds to my colleague from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES).

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, over the last 2 years, everybody has a COVID memory. It might be the masks that were mandated on folks across the United States. It might be that cup of coffee that you tried to drink, forgetting that your mask was on. It might be how we have seen incredible evolution—

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, against my better judgment, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES).

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Illinois for his evolution in thought there and for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, over the last 2 years, we have seen just an absolutely incredible experience going through COVID. It might be the mask mandates that were thrust upon people, and as I mentioned, it might even be a funny memory of people trying to eat or drink coffee through their mask, as I know I have.

We have seen this evolution in the workforce where people are working remotely all over the United States, and we have seen millions and millions of people choose to leave the workforce.

This is something that has affected so many people. We have seen multi-generational businesses close, and we have seen fledgling businesses surge as a result of COVID-19, as a result of this pandemic.

We have seen the record speed at which vaccines, plural, have been developed under Operation Warp Speed. We have seen treatment protocols that have evolved. And, by some measure, we have seen up to a million Americans that have lost their lives.

Mr. Speaker, there is so much history behind COVID-19, behind this pandemic. There have been things that have been just absolutely remarkable, like the innovation in our pharmaceuticals, in developing vaccines, innovation in technology with the evolution of incredibly convenient technology like Zoom or Webex or GoTo Meeting or other technologies allowing people to videoconference, sometimes wearing shorts or pajama pants with their suit up top. This has been absolutely amazing, watching what has happened.

But perhaps, Mr. Speaker, the most powerful impact of COVID-19 is not necessarily the successes and failures, the misfires, the things that have worked well, but it has been our personal losses.

Mr. Speaker, the sponsor of this bill, Congresswoman JULIA LETLOW from my home State of Louisiana, lost just an incredible man, a man who had a servant's heart, a man who cared so much for those that couldn't necessarily fight for themselves.

Congressman-elect LUKE LETLOW was elected to represent the small communities around Louisiana and around this Nation, I will say it again, to fight for those that were, in many cases, incapable of having a voice by themselves that was needed to change policy. But, collectively, Congressman-elect LETLOW was going to change that.

I want to thank Congresswoman LETLOW, Luke's wife, and the Representative from that area, for having the leadership, for bringing this bill up, for making sure that we don't ever forget about all of the powerful lessons learned from COVID-19, that we don't forget about all of these powerful people, the heroes that lost their lives caring for others, in some cases; those people that were on the front lines trying to allow this country to continue, our economy to continue, our society to continue.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman LETLOW for her leadership on this legis-

lation, and I want to thank her for recognizing all the lives that were lost in the history here. I urge adoption of the bill.

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. GARBARINO), my good friend.

Mr. GARBARINO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4738, the COVID-19 American History Project Act.

I am proud to co-sponsor this bill and stand with my friend, Congresswoman LETLOW, who knows better than most the devastation of this pandemic.

Two years ago this month, an unknown virus swept across the world, taking lives and changing others forever. Our way of life was brought to an abrupt halt, and even now, we are still trying to claw our way back to normal.

Our State was hit hard and early. Nearly 70,000 New Yorkers lost their lives to COVID-19. Too many families are now missing fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters. Too many friends are lost.

Hardly anyone has made it through the last 2 years unscathed. It is unlikely that those of us living through this pandemic will ever forget these years of strife.

What about those after us? Only by preserving and remembering times of difficulty can we ensure that future generations are prepared for what may come their way.

Mr. Speaker, the memories of our friends and loved ones lost to COVID deserve to live on. The memory of Luke Letlow and that of hundreds of thousands of Americans like him deserve to live on.

This bill would ensure that they do and that their loss will serve as a reminder for future generations.

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Louisiana (Ms. LETLOW), the sponsor of this piece of legislation and my good friend.

Ms. LETLOW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as the House considers H.R. 4738, the COVID-19 American History Project Act.

The last 2 years have been unimaginable for every single American. As COVID-19 ravaged our Nation, we lost nearly 1 million citizens to this devastating virus.

For countless families, those deaths were not just a number on the news but the visceral loss of a loved one: a grandparent, a husband, a wife, a mom, a dad, a sister, a brother, a daughter, or a son.

My own family faced the pain of this pandemic as we lost my husband, Luke, just days before he would take a seat in this very Chamber.

Studies tell us that when a person dies, approximately nine people from

their inner circle, their family, friends, coworkers, and neighbors suffer profound grief.

This bill is dedicated to them, the now nearly 9 million Americans who live every day with newfound emptiness and suffering.

For families like mine, that loss means an empty chair at the dinner table, a son who won't be able to go fishing with his dad anymore, and a daughter who won't be able to dance with her father on her wedding day.

But this bill also values our people's personal experiences during the pandemic which will help inform the collective narrative. Their accounts will facilitate healing and give hope to the generations of Americans to follow.

The COVID-19 American History Project Act will task the Library of Congress to record, collect, and keep the stories of Americans impacted by the pandemic, personal accounts from those who survived this virus, from those who lost loved ones, and from our healthcare heroes, the doctors, nurses, technicians, ambulance drivers, and custodians who served on the front lines of this pandemic, and to whom we owe an enormous amount of gratitude.

This bill will allow us to use our voices as citizens to write the history of this time. Personal stories are powerful and can promote healing while also helping others who are hurting.

Medical research tells us that sharing a story through verbal or written means has a cathartic effect on a grieving individual. I know from my own life experiences that when we tell our stories of tragedy and loss, that is when true healing begins.

It is time for the American people to heal. It is time for us to finally put the fear and divisiveness of this pandemic behind us. It is time to let the values of hope and peace guide our Nation once again.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it is fitting for this bill to come up for a vote on the first day this House begins to reopen.

As we welcome the American people back inside their House, let us also welcome the countless stories of those we lost throughout these last 2 years.

Every day when I look into my toddlers' faces, I see their dad's amazing spirit, and I find comfort in knowing that his greatest legacy will live on through them.

But it is my children's generation and those not yet born who will need to know the personal history and indelible impact of this pandemic, and it should be written by the very people who lived it and were impacted directly.

My husband, Luke, loved history and had a tremendous passion for preserving our shared American heritage. His knowledge of the past profoundly shaped his public service.

I think of the hours he spent poring over historical documents, writing and publishing the stories of the people who came before us.

Let us preserve today's stories, not just to write a record, but to inform

the decisions of those who will stand in this Chamber decades from now and chart the course for our Republic.

It is the dawn of a new day in America, one where we can finally begin to move forward from COVID-19. And while we vow never to forget the great suffering and loss so many of us endured, we stand emboldened by the collective healing of the American spirit.

The Library of Congress' mission is to engage, inspire, and inform Congress and the American people with a universal and enduring source of knowledge and creativity.

Let us amplify the voices of the American people. Let us use their stories and experiences to write this history, and never let us forget those we lost.

In closing, I am reminded of a quote from Rick Warren who said, "Other people are going to find healing in your wounds. Your greatest life messages and your most effective ministry will come out of your deepest hurts."

Mr. Speaker, it is time for us to let our country heal. It is time for us to share our stories.

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I have been in this institution now and had the privilege to serve here for over 9½ years. And that was, by far, one of the most inspiring personal stories that I have had a chance to witness.

I can tell you, based upon what I learned about Luke Letlow from my colleagues like GARRET GRAVES and STEVE SCALISE and CLAY HIGGINS and others, was that Luke Letlow was so excited to be a part of what we sometimes take for granted here in the House.

I was a former staff member just like Mr. Letlow was, but his runoff election was right at the time between orientation, where I would have had a chance to meet him, and a chance for him to be sworn in. And that is when the tragedy that Congresswoman LETLOW talked about her family facing took place.

Luke Letlow didn't get a chance to raise his right hand and be a part of this House, but his legacy will live on forever as part of this oral history project.

I cannot think of a better way for a mother to be able to give her children, in honor of their dad and her husband, the legacy that he deserves than by passing this bill tonight.

Mr. Speaker, I urge everyone in this institution to vote "yes" to preserve the legacy of not only Luke Letlow but of those whose families have been impacted the exact same way as the Letlow family by this pandemic.

Let's move beyond this pandemic but let us never forget. Let us remember our heroes, and let us remember those families, and let us remember how great our country is to be able to move beyond.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Congresswoman for bringing forward this very poignant and important legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues as well to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 4738, the "COVID-19 American History Project Act."

This bill directs the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress to establish the COVID-19 American History Project which will collect and make publicly available individual stories and records of experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States.

The bill includes a requirement to collect video and audio histories and testimonials of those who were affected by the pandemic.

Mr. Speaker, the United States will soon reach a grave milestone. As of 9 o'clock this morning, there have been 974,277 American deaths from COVID-19. In the coming weeks, we will reach 1,000,000 deaths.

However, I believe that only focusing on that horrific number, though nonetheless important, makes us forget about who we lost.

Therefore, with this time I would like to tell the stories of my fellow Houstonians who sadly passed because of this unprecedented public health crisis.

The stories I will be recounting are all courtesy of Houston Public Media, of whose journalists I have been a strong supporter.

Knowing that his daughter would be unable to walk at her college graduation commencement due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Carlos Araujo-Preza threw his daughter, Andrea Araujo, a belated graduation celebration with her close friends and family in late October. She said he really put in the effort to give her the best ceremony he could.

Dr. Araujo-Preza always went out of his way to make sure his daughter and her brother were taken care of, despite a busy work schedule at Tomball Regional Hospital. The siblings and their father spent their weekends together binge-watching movies and TV shows together.

But in 2020, Andrea Araujo was forced to spend her 23rd birthday without her father.

Araujo-Preza was two weeks away from receiving his first round of the COVID-19 vaccine before he passed away. He died Nov 30, 2020, at the age of 51.

He knew at a young age he was meant to pursue a career in the medical field. Coming from a family of doctors himself, Araujo-Preza was viewed as a loving caregiver and someone his patients could always rely on.

Araujo-Preza was the leading doctor at his hospital who specialized in plasma research, while also distributing COVID-19 vaccines to nurses.

"His colleagues were fans of him," she said. "They loved when he came into work."

He would go out of his way to give his personal phone number to patients and would accommodate their needs at any time of day. Araujo said her father would wake up as early as 3 a.m. to go into work. Araujo-Preza would sleep in the hospital for days and sometimes weeks at a time to always be on call for his patients.

Now, Araujo said she tries to live by a saying her father used to share in Spanish: "The sun always rises the next day." Araujo-Preza would tell his children to not let daily challenges in life hold them back. Because, he said, as life goes on, you should too.

"I feel like people always say, 'with time, things get better', but I've noticed it's quite the opposite," she said. "Every day gets harder."

That story was courtesy of Emily Jaroszewski at Houston Public Media.

The next story is one that is especially close to my heart: Dick Cigler from the University of Houston.

Those who were mentored by Dick Cigler would tell you he left a lasting impression as one of the most influential staff members at the Daily Cougar—a highly regarded champion of free speech at the University of Houston's newspaper.

"He taught us about the importance of journalism," said Tanya Eiserer, an Emmy-award winning reporter for WFAA in Dallas and former Daily Cougar student editor. "He really taught us the importance of doing the right thing, doing it for the right reasons; and standing up for the underdog."

Nowhere was that more evident than when, in the 1990s, a group of UH journalists wrote a series of articles challenging the decreased university budget for UH downtown students and the increased budget for subsidiary campuses.

Dick allowed the students to voice their concerns brazenly.

"He didn't try to, you know, tell us to back down," Eiserer said. "He ran interference, and they knew that we were an independent news operation."

Eiserer remembers Cigler as being a listening ear and a guiding mentor when she transferred from Baylor University to UH. She regarded him as one of the people who helped her become the reporter she is today.

"I learned how to be a journalist at the Daily Cougar," said Eiserer. "I would not give that time back for all the money in the world."

Cigler worked as Director of UH's Student Publications department, now known as the Center for Student Media, for 23 years until his retirement in 2010.

His impact on the Daily Cougar can be felt to this day.

Cigler died on Jan. 24, 2021, at the age of 79. He leaves behind his two daughters Kerri Runge and Michelle Cigler.

That story was courtesy of Myrakel Baker at Houston Public Media.

The last individual I want to mention is someone who is a local hero but should be a national one. That person was John Bland.

More than 60 years ago, a group of Texas Southern University students took seats at the lunch counter at Weingarten's Supermarket at 4110 Alameda Road, knowing they wouldn't be served.

It was Houston's first sit-in, and that spring, Black college students in cities across the country forced the beginning of an end to racial segregation—at lunch counters, department stores, and city halls.

One of the TSU students at the sit-in was John Bland, a 20-year-old who spent the rest of his life working to advance civil rights and equal opportunity.

Bland worked as a bus operator at HouTran, now called Metro, and he spent more than 50 years organizing with the Transport Workers Union. He served as a vice president of the Texas State AFL-CIO, a president of the Houston chapter of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, a precinct judge, and a member of the Houston Police Department Citizen Review Committee.

"When workers would doubt their ability to beat the odds and make change, Mr. Bland would say, 'When we fought for integration in the 1960s, they arrested me 27 times, jailed me, and fined me, but that didn't stop us,'" Hany Khalil, Executive Director of the Texas Gulf Coast Area Labor Federation, said.

Bland died on July 9, 2020, at the age of 80. He leaves behind his wife, Betty Davis Bland, and their two daughters and grandson.

That story was courtesy of Jen Rice at Houston Public Media.

I wish I could mention every Houstonian and honor their lives because they all deserve it. They were mothers, wives, fathers, husbands, sons, daughters, and so much more. They will all be missed and are not just another number.

It is for that reason, Mr. Speaker, that I strongly support H.R. 4738 and urge my colleagues to support it as well.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4738, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. MOORE of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion are postponed.

□ 1800

STATUE TO HONOR UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT ASSOCIATE JUSTICE SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR AND STATUE TO HONOR UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT ASSOCIATE JUSTICE RUTH BADER GINSBURG

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 3294) to obtain and direct the placement in the Capitol or on the Capitol Grounds of a statue to honor Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States Sandra Day O'Connor and a statue to honor Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 3294

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. FINDINGS.

(a) SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR.—Congress finds the following:

(1) Sandra Day O'Connor was born in 1930 in El Paso, Texas, and spent her childhood on her family's isolated Arizona cattle ranch. She lived with her grandmother in El Paso during the school year, away from her home and parents.

(2) O'Connor matriculated at Stanford University at the age of 16, and combined her undergraduate and law school curricula, graduating with a bachelor's degree in eco-

nomics and a law degree in just 6 years. She was third in her law school class, behind William Rehnquist, her future colleague on the Supreme Court of the United States (in this section referred to as the "Supreme Court").

(3) Despite her qualifications, O'Connor could not find work as an attorney because of bias against women in the law. She ended up negotiating for an unpaid position in the San Mateo County District Attorney's office at a shared desk, while her husband, John, finished at Stanford Law School 1 year later.

(4) O'Connor traveled to Frankfurt, Germany, in 1954 with her husband John, who had joined the United States Army Judge Advocate General's Corps, where she was able to find work as a civilian attorney with the United States Army Quartermaster Corps. In 1957, O'Connor returned to Arizona and still could not find work with a traditional law firm due to her gender, so she "hung out a shingle" as a sole practitioner.

(5) In 1965, O'Connor was hired as an Assistant Attorney General for the State of Arizona.

(6) Active in Republican Party politics and well-received for her work at the Arizona State Capitol, O'Connor was appointed to an Arizona State Senate seat in 1969 when the incumbent, also a woman, was appointed to a Federal position and vacated the office.

(7) In 1970, O'Connor was elected to the Arizona State Senate and served 2 consecutive terms. In 1972, she was selected as Majority Leader of the Arizona State Senate, the first time a woman held such a position in any State.

(8) In 1974, O'Connor ran for office as a trial court judge. She won and was later appointed to the Arizona Court of Appeals in 1979.

(9) On August 19, 1981, President Ronald Reagan nominated O'Connor to be an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, to fill the seat vacated by Associate Justice Potter Stewart. On September 21, 1981, the Senate confirmed O'Connor's nomination by a unanimous vote, making her the first woman to serve on the Supreme Court.

(10) O'Connor established herself as a pragmatic, independent voice on the Supreme Court, casting decisive votes during a time when the Court was being asked to resolve politically charged issues.

(11) In the 1982 case of *Mississippi University for Women v. Hogan*, O'Connor wrote the majority opinion holding that the State could not prevent men from enrolling in an all-women's nursing school, writing that laws discriminating on the basis of sex would be allowed only if there was an "exceedingly persuasive justification" for them.

(12) O'Connor sought, when possible, to find the middle ground between her often-divided colleagues, frequently joining the majority decision but presenting her views in concurring opinions that eschewed broad constitutional doctrine in favor of resolving the cases before the Court.

(13) O'Connor put a very public face on the role of the Supreme Court, domestically and around the world. She became the Court's most prolific public speaker, traveling to all 50 States and to countless law schools, libraries, and public events to describe how the Court works and its role in our constitutional form of government. She traveled worldwide as an ambassador for the Rule of Law and the independence of judiciaries everywhere.

(14) After 24 years on the Supreme Court, O'Connor announced her retirement to care for her ailing husband, who had Alzheimer's disease. President George W. Bush nominated John Roberts, Jr., for the vacancy, but before Roberts was confirmed, Chief Justice Rehnquist passed away, creating a second vacancy. President Bush personally appealed